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FM AMCONSUL MONTERREY

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4122

INFO RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY 5207

RUEHXC/ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO COLLECTIVE

RUEABND/DEA HOS WASHDC

RUEFHLC/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC

RHMFISS/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC

RHMFISS/FBI WASHINGTON DC

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RUEHMC/AMCONSUL MONTERREY 9746

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTERREY 000435

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/18/2019

TAGS: [KCRM](#) [PINS](#) [SNAR](#) [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [SOCI](#) [CVIS](#) [MX](#)

SUBJECT: EMBATTLED SAN PEDRO MAYOR REFUSED ENTRY TO U.S.

REF: A) MEXICO 3208; B) MONTERREY 344; C) MONTERREY 412

CLASSIFIED BY: Bruce Williamson, Consul General.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: On November 13, Brownsville, Texas CBP officials denied entry to San Pedro's polemic mayor, Mauricio Fernandez and a female companion. Fernandez told media sources that he had forgotten his visa, but CBP sources indicated that they found a small quantity of marijuana in a pipe in Fernandez's suitcase and that his companion had both marijuana and pills that preliminary tests indicated could contain the drug 'ecstasy.' The pills will be further analyzed to determine their content. Only 17 days into his term, the San Pedro mayor continues to stir up controversy, calling into question his long term viability in that position. End Summary.

Mayor Claims Forgot to Bring Visa

¶2. (U) On November 13, CBP officials barred entry to San Pedro Mayor Mauricio Fernandez at the Brownsville, Texas border crossing. According to media reports, Fernandez planned to spend the Mexican holiday weekend fishing at South Padre Island, a Texas beach resort. Fernandez told reporters that, upon arrival, he discovered that he had forgotten his visa. CBP officials then forced him to return to Mexico. However, some media sources hinted at another version of events. According to several newspapers, Fernandez was detained for possession of marijuana. Others indicated he had another controlled substance in his possession.

A Different Version

¶3. (C) Brownsville CBP officials told Post's ICE Attache that they referred Fernandez and his young female companion, Aleyda Ortega Peza, to secondary inspection. CBP inspectors then discovered 6 grams of marijuana and 209 pills in Ortega's possession and a pipe filled with marijuana in Fernandez's suitcase.

¶4. (C) A preliminary test indicated that the pills Ortega carried contained the illegal substance 'ecstasy,' but the tablets could have been another substance, such as muscle relaxer. For a definitive answer, CBP sent the pills to a laboratory for more exhaustive testing, the results of which are expected in 30 days. During his detention, Fernandez admitted to CBP officials that he sometimes smoked pot (personal use is legal in Mexico). Both he and Ortega were fined US\$ 5000 (which was then mitigated to US\$500) and their visas were revoked before they were released to return to Mexico.

Comment

¶5. (C) Only 17 days into his term, Fernandez continues to be mired in controversy. In an earlier conversation with the CG, he advocated extrajudicial action to eliminate organized crime (ref B) and then later appeared to be collaborating with the Arturo Beltran Leyva cartel in a plan to reduce kidnapping and common crime in San Pedro (ref C). Most alarmingly, at his October 31 inauguration, he announced the death of four drug cartel members, who he claimed planned to assassinate him, hours before police had identified the bodies. He has since provided several different explanations as to the source of this information.

¶6. (C) Given his increasingly erratic behavior, flamboyant personality and apparent disregard for the rule of law, Post currently questions whether Fernandez (a former PAN federal Senator with a storied lineage in Monterrey), will be able to complete his three-year term in office.

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